



## THE PARULA WARBLER AND ITS NEST.

Walking through the woods one day, I was surprised by a bird dropping lightly to the ground at my feet, and, (as I stopped instantly) seeing it calmly go about picking up tiny bits as if I were not there. It was a mite of a bird, and beautifully marked with various colors. After a few moments it flew on through the woods and I said to myself, "some one is going to house-keeping and I wonder who?"

I came home and went to my books, and yes, it was as I thought and hoped, the Parula Warbler. I had seen mounted specimens and pictures, but this was my first acquaintance with the bird

The next day I came upon the same bird on a bush and as I looked at it, it flew up into a tree close by, and into a dark spot among the foliage, where I could see that it was jerking and twitching things about, and then away. Still watching and peeping I finally found an opening which showed me a nest, and then the bird came back with more material and renewed its work. You may know that this was highly interesting since the books say it builds its nest in the long tufts of gray lichens, (*Usnea barbata*), and this was not in long moss, but in the boughs of a hemlock tree! A beech had been blown over and leaned against this hemlock bending some of the branches until they were quite perpendicular, and very thick, so of course it made a place more like the moss which it is said to use. I visited this nest often, but it was so high up—about forty-five feet—that I could see nothing but the birds leaving or approaching it, and that it was a pendent nest, like that of the oriole, only smaller. I longed to get that nest down after Parula was done with it, but had not succeeded in doing so, when a storm in mid-winter carried it off. The next spring the Parulas were often seen about the bird's bathing-place, and were like most of the birds, very tame. Many times they shook off the water and preened their feathers on low branches near me, and glanced down at me most sociably. I had good opportunities for seeing their pretty markings, the bright yellow of chin and throat, melting into the rich orange-bronze across the breast, this changing suddenly to the white of underparts. The blue of upper parts with the bronze across the back and the two white wing-bars—instead of one as many books say. Then some dashes of white on the tail, and you have as dainty a bird as can be imagined.

Once I saw on the black mud which the overflow from the spring keeps wet, one of these tiny birds drinking from a dot of a lake, and it made me think of a delicate lace handkerchief dropped on a dusty floor, it was so small and frail and beautiful, and the black earth seemed so unfit for it to touch. I did not find the nest that year. The next spring I was puzzled for a long time by two bird songs which I could not place. I always heard them from the higher trees, and although I could get glimpses of the birds who sang them, they would not come down and tell me their names. The voice of one bird was slightly shrill, and the song went like this "-- --- / - - - - /" a trill followed by one longer accented note. The other was much sweeter and more varied, "-- - - / / / \\" represents the changes in the notes as well as I can give them. I was quite convinced that there were two different birds, but found at last that it was just one, and that, the Parula warbler. Besides these two songs there is the common call note "chip, chip,"

Then one day when I was out a bird flashed by me and up into a tree close by. I followed its flight and there was again the Parula's nest and again in a hemlock! About twenty-five feet high, in the lowest branch, and where the green was thickest and pendent, this time without any outside help to make them so, it just grew that way, and Madam Parula had looked and seen that it was just the place for a nest. The tree stood just outside my garden fence and about a rod from the tree that held the nest two years ago. The nest was not quite finished as the birds made many trips to and from it, and jerked and twitched things about whenever they were in it. After a week, Madam was evidently sitting, and several times while I watched, the male flew to the tree singing as he reached it; and almost instantly the female came out and flew off. She was gone perhaps five minutes and sometimes the male dived down into that dark spot in the branches and stayed until she came back, when he flew out and she in, without apparently seeing each other, though passing just above the nest, just pretending I suppose. At other times the male perched on a twig close to the nest and repeated his song, until his mate came back, when he flew off and could be heard singing about the trees all day.

Then for a week I was unable to visit the nest, and when I did it was deserted, but since I heard the song for the rest of the season I concluded the birds were safely hatched and flown in that short time. In the fall my husband climbed the tree and brought me the bough with the nest, and at last I could see how it was made. Very frail and the wall so thin one side was formed by only three or four bare twigs of hemlock,

but doubtless these bore their leaves when the nest was occupied and that would complete the wall on that side. Fine, thread-like green lichens and slender black roots compose the nest, and the latter are used to bind the hemlock twigs into the framework and support of the nest. One twig is bent up around the bottom and bound firmly there. The nest measures two inches deep, two and a half inches across one way and one and a half the other, being much flattened instead of round. The black roots look like those of the fern "Dicksonia" which grows plentifully here.

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### ALL DAY WITH THE BIRDS.

Tuesday, May 17, was the day agreed upon by the editor and myself in which to take a representative horizon of Lorain County birds. In order that it should be a fair test of the possibilities of a single day, we arranged to spend as much time in the field as possible, and at the same time cover a variety of bird haunts. With this in mind we began at 3:00 A. M., and devoted the best early morning hours to a favorite piece of woodland and thicket two miles out of town. There was a considerable frost on the ground, which no doubt dissuaded a number of birds from leaving us the night before, but the day became bright and warm and still—in fact an ideal bird day.

The chorus was opened at 3:15, while we were still in town, by the Chipping Sparrow, and he was joined within a minute by Robins and Mourning Doves. Between four and five hours were spent in the woods, which, with intervening fields, resulted in a horizon of seventy-one species by 8:00 A. M. This included several rare finds.

We chased a shy and very suspicious looking sparrow for a hundred yards or more along a shady creek in the heart of the woods. Finally when we had him pushed almost to the edge, he graciously treed at about twenty feet high, for a half a minute. How eagerly we scanned him!—altho at such long range!—but there could be no doubt! It was Lincoln's Sparrow. Later in the day, while we were poking in a small tangle near the lake, we came upon this bird again. Here too he was skulking in a creek bottom, but by walking one on each side of the creek, we got a double cinch on him. First, Mr. Jones drove him (on the ground) to the water's edge, and from across the stream I noted his head stripes, his pale streaked breast and his demure airs. Then I retired, while Mr.